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## ~ INTERSECTION OF SCIENCE AND ART ~

# WORLD-REOWNED ARTWORK TO TRANSFORM FAÇADE OF PHILADELPHIA'S HISTORIC FRANKLIN INSTITUTE AS PART OF THE NEW NICHOLAS AND ATHENA KARABOTS PAVILION

### 2,665 SQ. FOOT SHIMMER WALL IS A STRUCTURAL REPRESENTATION OF OUR CHANGING WEATHER

**PHILADELPHIA October 15, 2013** — Installation is underway on a nearly 3,000 square foot art structure designed by world-renowned environmental artist and sculptor [Ned Kahn](#), which will drape the façade of the new Nicholas and Athena Karabots Pavilion, the 53,000 square foot expansion of The Franklin Institute set to open June 2014. The first of its kind in Philadelphia, the kinetic Shimmer Wall is designed to mirror the sky and make wind and other natural weather elements visible. The intricate process of installing the panels will take several weeks to complete; live streaming of the Shimmer Wall installation can be viewed at: <http://www.fi.edu/karabots-pavilion/>.

Kahn's Shimmer Wall is a network of 12,500 five-inch-square clear-anodized aluminum panels hinged at one side only and able to freely move in the wind. During the day, the ever-changing wind pressure profile on the building will appear as undulating waves. At night, this movement will be converted into a very subtle light. In addition to revealing the changing patterns of the wind, the artwork boasts some environmental benefits, mainly the lack of direct energy use.

*“The Nicholas and Athena Karabots Pavilion will allow The Franklin Institute to fulfill the original 1930’s vision set forth for the museum, while also incorporating some distinctly new and modern features,”* explains Dennis M. Wint, President and CEO of The Franklin Institute. *“Ned Kahn’s Shimmer Wall is really quite exceptional in that it is essentially a structural representation of our changing weather and it is also a stunning look.”*

The 53,000 square-foot Nicholas and Athena Karabots Pavilion, named in honor of the lead donors, will highlight the close connections between science and art by incorporating a number of spectacular architectural and aesthetic elements. According to Peter Saylor, Partner of SaylorGregg Architects, *“the integration of Ned Kahn’s art structure as part of our pavilion’s architecture creates a uniquely dynamic palette of limestone, glass, stainless steel and kinetic aluminum panels which will add a signature new façade to the culturally packed Benjamin Franklin Parkway.”* The exterior of the new pavilion will use the same Indiana limestone as the original building, but will also incorporate noticeably modern features, such as a sustainable rain garden to mitigate storm-water drainage, an elegant sunlight-filled atrium connecting the Memorial to the new pavilion, and the dramatic kinetic Shimmer Wall. The interior of the Nicholas and Athena Karabots Pavilion will add 8,000 square feet of climate-

controlled gallery space (totaling 18,000 square feet of contiguous exhibit space), a signature permanent exhibit entitled *Your Brain*, sponsored by Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc., and state-of-the-art education and conference centers. The building will be LEED Silver certified upon completion with informational signage on the exterior of the pavilion to explain the entire sustainable design process, including details about the rain garden, as well as the Shimmer Wall.

High-resolution rendering of the Shimmer Wall on the Nicholas and Athena Karabots Pavilion:

<http://goo.gl/NRNrol> (user: press; pass: images)

### **The Franklin Institute's Shimmer Wall**

**Time to create:** From idea to execution was over 4 years

**Dimensions:** 72 feet by 44 feet; total of 2,665 square feet

**Aluminum pixels/flappers:** 12,500

### **About The Franklin Institute**

Located in the heart of Philadelphia, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. Pennsylvania's most visited museum, it is dedicated to creating a passion for learning about science by offering access to hands-on science education. For more information, visit [www.fi.edu](http://www.fi.edu).